

OPENING STATEMENT TO JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
ON NOMINATION TO THE SUPERIOR COURT BENCH

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of this honorable committee, I am Jay Carbonneau. It is simultaneously thrilling and humbling to come before you today. No matter what the future holds, I will count this day as one of my finest and proudest.

The outpouring of best wishes and strong support I have received from friends and colleagues and to be a member of **this** class of nominees is almost overwhelmingly gratifying.

I must first thank Governor Rell for this opportunity to serve the people of the State of Connecticut. I appreciate her nomination as an expression of confidence in my ability to serve this vital and visible function. With your approval I will do my utmost to carry out this responsibility with wisdom, compassion and equity.

May I thank my children, Brianna, Jason and Victoria, because I would not be who I am or what I am without having first been their father. Most of all, I am so very blessed, so very grateful for the love and encouragement of my strongest advocate, my toughest critic and my best friend, Holly Carbonneau, my wife of nearly thirty years.

I am a life-long resident of Connecticut, having grown up in Salisbury and Lakeville, the son of John and Peg Carbonneau, a beautician and a homemaker. As a boy, my parents' close friend, Attorney Tom Donlan, used to take me to court with him, a most positive introduction to the general practice of law. I majored in English at UConn and interned with the Rockville office of Connecticut Legal Services my last semester. There I met many articulate, tireless and passionate advocates who lived the law in service to the disadvantaged. I knew then that I wanted always to be among such people. I completed law school at Catholic University's Columbus School of Law in Washington, DC, but I returned to Connecticut in 1980 because I never met a native of DC -- only transplants from elsewhere. I suppose the "Land of Steady Habits" is in my blood...

As I nervously awaited the bar results, I volunteered with Litchfield County's Public Defender, Charles Gill. He immediately took me under his wing and exemplified a zealous advocacy with a caring heart. He introduced me to Walter Pickett, who outwardly at least, was the very image of the flinty New England Judge. Yet he took the time to teach a young practitioner the right way – the professional way – to conduct himself.

As my career progressed, I joined a larger firm in Hartford, and I happened to sue a member of the Connecticut Laborers' Union to collect a debt. I negotiated a fair settlement with Dick Walsh, then the Managing Attorney for the Laborers' Legal Services Fund. He needed to man a new office in Uncasville, so I sent him my resume. He took a chance on a still-green 28 year-old...

I spent nearly 12 years there working a wide variety of legal matters from Part A and GA criminal cases to writing simple wills, residential closings, family and juvenile cases, adoptions, small claims and both sides of evictions. I came to love Eastern Connecticut and to call it home for myself and my family. While serving the Laborers, I fortunately encountered other lawyers and judges to admire and emulate: Ed Osipowicz, still the shrewdest, most savvy lawyer I'll ever call friend; Stuart Einhorn, a most generous man – and prolific rainmaker – who carried me these last ten years as a sole practitioner; Sabino Tamborra, the archetype of a people's judge in the GA courts and Hadley Austin, a gentle thoughtful, articulate soul who agonized over the impact of every judicial decision he ever made. And there are many, many others...

I hope to serve as these people taught me. I wish to pay forward all the support, assistance and kindness shown to me. If you decide that I am worthy to sit as a Judge of our State, I will strive to live up to your highest expectations. I owe this to all I love and all I seek to follow.

Thank you for your attention, your time and your effort on my behalf. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee has, Mr. Chairman.